


## Structured Analysis Family Evaluation



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## About SAFE

- A structured,comprehensive home study method that contains a psychosocial evaluation illuminating both family strengths and issues of concern.
- A comprehensive suite of home study tools and practices
- Built on a foundation of strong practice values

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## About SAFE

Respectful of the family's expectations for open, transparent and fair treatment.

Information gathering and analysis techniques to describe and evaluate a family, its characteristics and capabilities.

Suitable for adoptive, foster or kinship families or for the dual licensure of concurrent planning resource families.

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## About SAFE

- Helpful and user-friendly for the social worker
- A Matching Inventory to assist the matching of a child's issues and needs with family strengths and capabilities.

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## Evolution of SAFE



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## Why SAFE?

- Lack of uniformity
- No psychosocial evaluation
- No effective information gathering or analysis tools
- Judgments based on worker bias
- Frequently irrelevant home study reports

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## Evolution of SAFE

- The original SAFE was founded on work done in 1985-87 by the Children's Bureau of Los Angeles in its Family Assessment Form (FAF).
- SAFE itself was developed and implemented in California during the Governors Adoption Initiative 1996-2001.

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## Evolution of SAFE

- In 2003, the Consortium for Children began further development and refinement of SAFE with the goal of implementing it outside of California.
- In 2004, the Consortium for Children was awarded a Federal grant to implement SAFE in Utah, Texas, Nevada, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Georgia and Oklahoma and the Cherokee Nation.

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## Evolution of SAFE

The grant was awarded to demonstrate that SAFE:

- Increases worker efficiency
- Improves quality of practice
- Assures accurate child/family matching
- Facilitates concurrent planning
- Eliminates cross-jurisdictional barriers
- Is appropriate for a national model.

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## Evolution of SAFE

In 2005, SAFE was also chosen for implementation in Colorado and in the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia.

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## SAFE Practice Values

- The SAFE home study process strives to be inclusive, not exclusive.
- The psychosocial evaluation is a key component of a SAFE home study.
- SAFE promotes a mutual evaluation process that recognizes family strengths and identifies and addresses issues of concern.

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## SAFE Practice Values

- SAFE is built on the belief that families and individuals have the capacity for change
- The social work interview is the foundation of good social work practice.
- Social workers must be aware of and understand how personal biases influence their perceptions and determinations.

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## SAFE Practice Values

- Home studies should never be accomplished without the benefit of supervision or consultation.
- Families should be advised at the beginning of the home study process that they shall have the opportunity to receive or read a copy of their final written home study report.

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## SAFE Tools



- Questionnaire One
- Questionnaire Two
- Psychosocial Inventory and Desk Guide
- Preformatted Home Study Report
- Matching Inventory

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## Questionnaires...

- PROMOTE INCREASED DISCLOSURE
- SAVE TIME
- PROMOTE FOCUSED INTERVIEWING
- PROMOTE UNIFORMITY
- COVER ISSUES THAT ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED
- PROVIDE FOR OPTIMAL FRAMING OF QUESTIONS
- PROMOTE MORE TRUTHFUL RESPONSES
- REDUCE MISCOMMUNICATION
- PROMOTE A SHARED EVALUATION PROCESS
- SUPPLEMENT THE SOCIAL WORK INTERVIEW

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QUESTIONNAIRE ONE HAS

*Eight* SECTIONS

1. Personal History
2. Work
3. Family Relationships
4. Marital/Domestic Partner Relationship
5. Support System
6. Parenting Practices
7. Personal and Family Values
8. Health



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Q-1 Replaces

Autobiography

No Autobiography required of applicants in SAFE

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Common Autobiography Problems

- **Superficial:** Usually contain irrelevant and self-promoting information.
- **Sins of omission:** Negative information is usually left out.
- **Creative writing contest:** Families with the best writing skills have an unfair advantage if the autobiography is used in the matching process.
- **Unpopular:** Families do not like doing them.
- **Time consuming:** Take too much time to complete, not returned in a timely manner.
- **Irrelevant questions:** Often ask families to answer irrelevant or confusing questions.

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## SAFE Questionnaire II

- Problem issues/behaviors
- Personal alcohol consumption
- Personal legal/illegal drug usage
- Family substance abuse
- History of childhood/adult sexual, emotional or physical victimization

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## SAFE Questionnaire II

- Child abuse allegations/convictions
- Family violence and crime
- Family sexual perpetrators
- Domestic violence
- Mental illness

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## Psychosocial Inventory and Desk Guide

Contains 68 factors compartmentalized in nine sections.

Each factor is rated on a five-point scale.

Uses specific criteria to be considered uniformly by every worker in every case

Helps to focus subsequent interviews

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DEFINITION OF NUMBERED RATINGS	
1	<b>EXCEPTIONAL STRENGTH</b> Represents exceptional strengths that positively influence safe and/or healthy family functioning and parenting.
2	<b>STRENGTH</b> Represents strengths that positively influence safe and/or healthy family functioning and parenting.
3	<b>ISSUE OF CONCERN</b> Represents an issue that could or would impede safe and/or healthy family functioning and parenting.
4	<b>MAJOR ISSUE OF CONCERN</b> Represents a more serious issue that could or would impede safe and/or healthy family functioning and parenting.
5	<b>VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM</b> Represents an extremely problematic issue that could or would severely impede safe and/or healthy family functioning and parenting.

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## The Psychosocial Inventory

- History
- Personal Characteristics
- Marital/Domestic Partner Relationship
- Sons/Daughters/Others Residing or Frequently in the Home

(See Page 11)

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## The Psychosocial Inventory

- Extended Family Relationships
- Physical/Social Environment
- General Parenting
- Specialized Parenting
- Adoption Issues

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## The Psychosocial Inventory is...

- A tool used along with the **SAFE Desk Guide** to systematically organize, process and analyze information.
- A tool that uses specific criteria to be considered uniformly by every worker in every case, thus insuring that critical issues are not overlooked.
- The foundation for the psychosocial evaluation.

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## Psychosocial Inventory

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## The "SAFE Cycle"

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## SAFE DESK GUIDE

Defines each psychosocial factor in the Psychosocial Inventory

Provides definitional statements that guide evaluators to the most appropriate numbered rating for each factor.

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## The Rule of Two

Presumption is that factors should be given a rating of 2 unless one finds a reason to believe otherwise.



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## Sample Section: History

- A-1 Childhood Family Adaptability
- A-2 Child Family Cohesion
- A-3 Childhood History of Deprivation/Trauma
- A-4 Childhood History of Victimization
- A-5 Adult History of Victimization/Trauma
- A-6 History of Child Abuse/Neglect
- A-7 History of Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- A-8 History of Crime/Arrests/Allegations/Violence
- A-9 Psychiatric History
- A-10 Occupational History
- A-11 Marriage/Domestic Partner Relationships History

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# Home Study Template

There are **two** basic SAFE home study templates

1. **Multipurpose Home Study Template (one for a single applicant and one for couples):** This template is used for applicants who have not identified a specific child to be placed with them. It can be used for adoption home studies, foster care home studies or consolidated home studies (foster care and adoption combined).
2. **Child-Specific Home Study Template (one for a single applicant and one for couples):** This template is used for applicants who want to be considered for a specific child. For example a relative placement or foster parents wanting to adopt their foster child.

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## Matching Inventory

- The SAFE Matching Inventory utilizes the SAFE methodology to help Placement Workers determine which families have the capability to parent to the needs of a child or youth who is already in the home or for whom a placement is being sought.
- The Matching Inventory uses the same 5-point scoring system for both the child or youth and the prospective family. Once families are identified, the worker reads the home studies and follows good social work practice to determine the best placement for the child or youth.

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## Narration

### Bringing It All Together



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## We Get Questions:

A concern has been voiced that if the SAFE study method is used, a family will be approved for both foster care and adoption and will feel entitled to adopt any child placed in the home. How might the use of SAFE handle this issue?

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An additional concern regarding SAFE is that the approach is too therapeutic, which may be beyond the capacity of Wisconsin workers. The comment voiced is that SAFE will make social workers into "therapists". How has that worked in practice in other states?

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**Is it possible to use SAFE only for foster care placements? Is approval for adoption granted with foster care licensing?**

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**With a family approved for foster care and for adoption through SAFE, what is the role of the adoption worker? Does the SAFE program have a mechanism for approving an adoptive placement of a particular child, even when the family is approved for adoption in general?**

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**It appears that there may be academic studies under way that compares SAFE to other home study methods. Are there any conclusions from these studies and can they be shared?**

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Areas of the study that score a "2" are thought to be neutral and therefore require little if any written information/explanation. Has there ever been a concern that staff might be more inclined to rate with 2's, given that less writing is then expected?

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**Structured Analysis  
Family Evaluation**

SAFE



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